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NO PLAYS EXCHANGED.

BAKER'S EDITION
OF PLAYS

In the Nick of Time

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BY GEORGE M. BAKER.

Author of "Amateur Dramas," "The Mimic Stage," "The Social Stage," "The Drawing-Room Stage," "Handy Dramas," "The Exhibition Dramas," "A Baker's Dozen," etc.

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IN THE NICK OF TIME

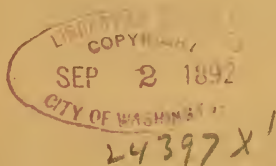
A Serio-Comic Drama in Three Acts

BY

ALEXANDER STREETER ARNOLD

AUTHOR OF "HENRY LOVELL," "CINDERELLA CARLETON," "FORTUNES AND
MISFORTUNES OF JACK GREEN," ETC.

34
Baker



BOSTON

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1892

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(NANCY opens the door and ushers in ABNER, CONRAD, DAVID, and MINER, armed with guns, etc.)

NANCY. Come right in, gentlemen, all of you. We keep open house to-night.

KITTY. Yes; walk right in, gentlemen. Plenty of room for a hearty welcome.

ABNER (*aside, glancing at KITTY*). Kitty Mason, as I live! How changed! Yet she can be no other than Kitty. So changed, and yet how the old love takes possession of every fibre of my being. Can it be possible, when I thought the old passion had died out long ago? Love! love! Is it not rather desire for revenge?

CONRAD. We're rough-looking customers, but honest as the day is long. Going for the gold-fields, some fifteen or twenty miles away we hear. Don't be afraid of us; but give us supper and breakfast, and we will tramp. We will pay you, for we're honest. Sort of rough diamonds, or diamonds in the rough.

(*As the conversation goes on the men dispose of arms, etc., and take seats.*)

NANCY. Make yourselves at home, gentlemen. Supper is fortunately nearly ready now.

MINER. Yes; and to-morrow for the gold-fields. Lots of the yellow dust, we hear.

NANCY. So says Dame Rumor. And were I a man how quickly would I start for that field. But I'm only a woman.

MINER. That need not stand in the way. I mean your sex should prove no barrier to riches. Why, my dear young lady, I will — you; I — I —

NANCY. Sir!

MINER. Now don't! pray don't! Upon the honor of a true knight-errant I meant no harm. Excuse me, Miss — Miss —

NANCY. You make a miss or two of it.

MINER. And as you are also a miss, there's a good miss for both you and me.

NANCY. Well, I must say that you make yourself wonderfully at home for a perfect stranger.

MINER. Excuse me, Miss Norton, I've some good qualities; but I make no pretensions to perfection by any means.

NANCY (*aside*). I wonder how the wretch caught my name. But I do believe I like the rascal after all. (*Aloud.*) You're quite right, Mr. — Mr. —

MINER. Did not quite catch my name. (*Aside.*) But she's caught me. Looks just as she did when we made mud pies together. Well, I've made a mash. Smitten as well as myself. Miner, you're in luck, and I congratulate you most heartily! Splendid young lady! (*Aloud.*) Have you caught my name yet?

NANCY. Certainly I have. You're a miner, are you not?

MINER. You are a witch. No, no! I beg pardon — a fairy; for Miner is my name. How easily you guessed it. Did you not say

that supper was ready? And shall I have the honor and the pleasure? (*Extends his arm.*)

NANCY. Sir! how dare you?

MINER. Now don't! please don't, Miss Norton; for you know I meant no offence. Heaven forbid that I should ever be guilty of insulting the most degraded woman on earth, much less a lady like yourself. But lead the way to the supper-table; for we are hungry as bears.

(*All leave the room except ABNER and KITTY.*)

ABNER. Kitty Mason!

KITTY. Heavens! how you startled me!

ABNER. At last we meet, and you are in my power.

KITTY. In your power! What do you mean, Abner Mills? for now I recognize you. Why, surely you can bear no malice against me. I never willingly wronged you. If I have it was wholly unintentional.

ABNER. Never wronged me? Two years ago you refused my hand in marriage. Yes; and when I was half crazed through the loss of my sister. The very next day you accepted Lionel Forrest. But don't forget that you are not yet married.

KITTY. Yes; but I never meant to be unkind. Had I even dreamed that you would so take my refusal to heart I should most certainly have postponed my acceptance of Lionel until you and I could meet as firm friends. I thought your great unhappiness caused by your only sister's sudden death, coupled with that of Mollie Brown, whom I always thought you loved instead of me.

ABNER. If you thought that why not have aided me? But instead you left me to continually brood over the wreck of my happiness, and curse fate which mercilessly threw that Lionel Forrest in my path to block up my way to happiness. Just as I had won you he appeared. Curse him! His death or your hand must end this drama.

KITTY. O Abner, you cannot mean what you say. Your heart is too kind, too generous.

ABNER. I had such a heart before I lost my sister and you refused me; but it is now harder than adamant. There are two paths for you to choose. Remember that you are now in my power.

KITTY. No, sir; I am not in your power. Your very companions would not permit you to harm me, had I no others to protect me.

ABNER. Don't flatter yourself by counting on their being the defenders of any forlorn damsels. They are neither Don Quixotes nor Ivanhoes, but simply my tools for any, yes, any work of mine; not champions of injured innocence, but my instruments.

KITTY. Then heaven help me; for I will never consent to be yours.

ABNER. Ah, my pretty dear, I see that I must use force. Know

also that Lionel is at the gold-fields; and I am now on my way thither to take his life. No law but might there.

KITTY. What! has it come to this? Such threats to me, sir? You have wiped out the deserving of pity. Quit my presence at once or I must leave you. I will not consent that we breathe the same atmosphere.

ABNER. Don't think to escape me, my pretty miss. After this reception a double revenge will alone suffice. Yourself and his life may pay the forfeit. And now one kiss to set an appetite for supper.

KITTY. Don't you dare pollute me with so much as a touch.

ABNER. Endeavoring to frighten Abner Mills! (*Laughs.*) Well, that is rich, I must say. Tragedy queen! Come, Kitty, you're too old for that. You're no longer a child; so bow gracefully to the inevitable.

(*A struggle here ensues for the kiss, in the midst of which SOLOMON STOKES enters, simply utters the word "Period," as he brings his rifle to bear on ABNER, who starts back. Tableau. KITTY exit, and the next moment enter DAVID, CONRAD, MINER, and NANCY. SOLOMON lowers his rifle.*)

ABNER. Nothing but a poor joke; nothing more, I assure you.

SOLOMON. Not a nary excuse more, stranger. So if you will overlook my tarnal rudeness in pinting that ere shooter at your mug, we'll call it square. You may cut me up into sasengers if I wa'n't the least bit riled. It goes agin my grain to see female innercence and vartu trod on. Why, you might just as well tread on the tail of the American Eagle in my presence. Long may she wave!

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! (*Any smile, laugh or chuckle that comes most natural.*) I guess you'll take the cake.

SOL. (*turning to DAVID*). I'm thinking that I kinder sorter like you. That's sponge cake frosted with taffy.

DAVID. A little taffy, now and then, is relished by the best of men. Were you born around here, Mr. Stokes?

SOL. Not to any great extent. Born mostly on Seekonk Plain, if my memory serves me right; but my native place is Providence.

DAVID (*smiling*). Sure of it?

SOL. Well, I was there and ought to know. But where did ye say ye was headed for, strangers?

DAVID. For the gold-fields, after the dust, of course.

SOL. Well, gold is not a quarter as plenty as it used ter was; but there's lots left. Look out for the Injuns. I tell you they are considerable numerous.

DAVID. What, Indians plenty yet?

SOL. Thick as pigs at Brighton; and they are so tarnal thick that every other man you meet is a hog.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! Used to kill half a dozen Indians some days, I suppose.

SOL. Half dozen! Shot eighteen of them varmints one day before breakfast. Tell ye how 'twas, neighbors. Ye see, we had piled up a lot of dry grass for our horses; and one morning I went out to get a handful to start the fire, hay instead of shavings, you know. When I got within a rod I seed some dark things leaning agin the stack. I smelt a mice at once, and just bent my gun barrel by pulling at both ends with the middle agin a tree. Then I just walks up to the haystack, where there was nothing leaning agin it, kneeled, and fired over my head. Jerusalem! you ought to heard the Injuns yell like forty-leven catamounts. You see, there was eighteen Injuns leaning agin the stack, waiting in ambush for us, sound asleep. Well, that rifle ball went clear round the stack, and just cleaned off eighteen noses. Didn't hold the gun nigh enough to the stack ye see. But didn't make no odds; for I had in nigh onto ten fingers of powder, and that ball whizzed round agin just as the Injuns were dodging their heads forward fur enough to let daylight through every one of them ere varmints' noddles. True as a speech in Congress. Hope to be sent to Jericho if it ain't.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha!

SOL. What remark was ye making?

DAVID. I didn't say anything.

SOL. Oh, I thought ye asked if there was force enough to send the ball through all their noddles; and I was going to say that it went with such force that if it hadn't flattened agin my gun barrel it would have busted me up in business, sure as you're born.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! Grand climate I hear; salubrious!

SOL. Salubrious? Why, hot ain't no name for it. So tarnal hot that Jed Appleby—you know Jed.

DAVID. Can't say as I do.

SOL. What! don't know Jed Appleby, son of old Deacon Appleby? Where've you lived all your life? Never on Seekonk Plain?

DAVID. Never visited that city.

SOL. Why, 'tain't a city. It's part of a town. Don't seem as if you'd travelled much. Well, Jed went home just as an awful cold snap came on, and he did nothing but shake and shiver from morning till night; nearly shook his hair off. Shivered so that half his teeth fell out, and he couldn't keep his coat on without being tied on ter him with a hard knot. Fact, by gracious!

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! You don't say so?

SOL. One night they made his bed on a red-hot stove; and 'twan't ten minutes 'fore he asked his father, the deacon, to bring in a buffalo robe to spread over him. True as you set there.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! Oh, of course it's true.

SOL. Been down in Maine, of course?

DAVID. Not one of us.

SOL. Jerusalem! Your mams and dads must er kept ye mighty close. Never saw the thermometer forty degrees below freezo on a three-weeks stretch?

DAVID. Never did.

SOL. Well, I have, neighbor. Lumbering on the Andrew Scoggin River. Bars thicker'n muskeeters, and full as hungry. Stole our provisions. Bought twenty-four watch-dogs. Bars didn't trouble us much till it got so cold that the thermometer froze up and busted. More'n a hundred degrees below freezo. Fact! I vow ter gracious if 'twa'n't. Dogs had barked half the time every night. Woke up that night and not even a whine. Reconnoitred a little, and found twenty-four dogs froze stiff. Hope ter die if they wa'n't froze solid. I made up a rousing fire, and laid the whole pack all around it. 'Twa'n't two minutes 'fore one barked, and in ten more the whole twenty-four growled and barked enough to wake the seven sleepers. Fact! True as ever a man stuck an axe in ter a tree.

DAVID. Don't doubt it in the least.

SOL. Don't ask you to believe me. Only ask them lumbermen; that's all.

DAVID. Oh, we don't doubt your story one single particle.

SOL. Of course you don't. If you did, I wouldn't condescend to explain. Fact on't was, the barks froze right in the dogs' throats, and when we thawed 'em out they barked like Jehosaphat.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! A very reasonable explanation.

SOL. Nothing goes again' my grain worse'n falsehood! Hope to die, it what I tell you wa'n't facts. Every word, I vow to gracious.

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! All your utterances bear the impress of truth.

SOL. But come, neighbor; you and I ain't been to supper. (SOLOMON and ABNER *move towards door.*) From the day I was so year old (*puts his hand on level with his knee*) my parents instilled into my mind the principles of truth; and George Washington and his little hatchet has been the subject of my deepest meditations. Let innercence be your guiding star, and truth your *e pluribus unum!*

(*Exeunt* ABNER and SOLOMON.)

DAVID. Ha! ha! ha! He beats all the live Yankees I ever saw.

(*Exeunt* DAVID and CONRAD. *Enter* KITTY MASON.)

KITTY. Nancy, a word with you. But pray don't leave, Mr. Miner. I shall detain Miss Norton but a moment.

MINER. Excuse me a moment. Couldn't stay away unless compelled to. (*Aside.*) I wonder what she is up to.

KITTY. Thank you! And you will confer a favor by making yourself entirely at home. But where is my friend, Mr. Stokes.

MINER. Off with Abner Mills. About as thick as three in a bed. Why, you were really frightened and run like a hare. Left without so much as thanking your gallant preserver. I am a shade puzzled; for unhappy and cold as an iceberg as he certainly is, Abner Mills was never known to do a mean act. But I am sure of

one thing; your Yankee is a first-class fraud. Lies like all the Cretans. (*Exit.*)

KITTY. And so Abner has caught my very preserver. Well, villainy will contaminate and corrupt a whole community while goodness is trying to make one soul moral.

NANCY. Oh, I'm sure, Kitty, it is not quite so bad as all that. True, falsehood may mount and run a mile while truth is fixing her saddle; yet there's always a smash-up before the final goal is reached; but truth is not found in the *débris*, but at the stand where the laurel wreath is waiting for the victor.

KITTY. Original! You ought to turn preacher or reformer. But I tell you there is danger. Oh, believe me, Nancy, there was not the slightest fun, but a method and earnestness, in Abner's madness that bodes ruin to me. And in heaven's name I ask you to aid me. Were all my fears wholly groundless, precaution could not harm us.

NANCY. To hear is to obey. Speak and it is done; for wise precaution is never out of place.

KITTY. Mr. Miner is not bad-looking: agreeable.

NANCY. Oh, passable, perhaps.

KITTY. But he is quite good-looking, and seems honest and above-board.

NANCY. If you think him good-looking, let it go so; but you know tastes differ. But what has that to do with your safety? Surely he is no villain!

KITTY (*aside*). She's smitten, by all the rules of love. Well, so much the better. (*Aloud.*) I want you to encourage the attentions of Mr. Miner. Our only hope, my only refuge, seems to centre in winning these men. Remember that you are working for my sake, and I shall never forget it. Bear in mind also that although there are undoubtedly as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, there are schools of fish who never will be taken even with a drag-net. Don't forget that a fine little trout landed on *terra firma* is worth forty large salmon swimming in the river. And now depending on you, I go to seek Nellie Bly.

(*Exit KITTY MASON. Enter MINER.*)

MINER. All alone?

NANCY. Why, yes, I believe Miss Mason has deserted us. But I suppose your companions will return from supper in a moment or two.

MINER (*aside*). O ho! a little anxious as well as myself. Well, I thought as much, if not more. She's just my style. O Miner, you're a lucky dog. Now just go in and win. (*Aloud.*) Miss Mason took the hint, I guess. Don't you think you and I are sufficient company for the present?

NANCY. Well, you see — I — I think — that is to say, I mean that — that —

MINER. Decidedly so! That's just my opinion exactly.

NANCY (*aside*). I wonder what he means. He appears very uneasy as well as myself, and quizzing me too.

MINER (*aside*). Well, here we are alone together, and just the situation I have so longed for; and yet I would almost stake my very life that I allow the golden opportunity to pass unimproved, and the prize will slip through my fingers. If a faint heart never won a fair lady, I'm a defeated man. My mouth seems to cleave to the tongue of my right hand — I mean that my tongue seems to cleave to the roof of my mouth. I'm like too many soldiers — very brave, oh, awful courageous when they snuff the battle afar off; but in a contest, hand to hand, — yes, I'm after her hand. But according to the present state of my own physical constitution, I should judge that popping the question was very unconstitutional. However, when a man's constitution is gone, he must live on the by-laws. So here goes without regard to race, color, or previous condition of servitude. (*Aloud, after taking a long breath.*) Miss Norton, I have something in particular I wish to say to you, and that is, seeing that we are alone, I would like to — to — embrace — embrace you — I mean —

NANCY. Sir! do you mean to — to —

MINER (*rapidly*). No, no, no, no. I don't mean to — to — to — to — I mean embrace the opportunity, seeing we are alone.

NANCY. Oh!

MINER. But I'm just like the fast horse my uncle gave me: only one thing prevents his making his mile in three minutes.

NANCY. And what is that?

MINER. Distance too great for the time. I've such a lot to say, and so little time in which to say it. Then I'm sick too.

NANCY. I'm very sorry. Are you quite sick?

MINER. Yes; got the heart disease. Beats like a trip-hammer. Awful palpitation of the heart. (*Aside.*) Well, let her palp; for I must go in and win, or some one will come in, and I shall be like the convict who broke jail. Sha'n't quite finish my sentence. (*Aloud.*) Miss Norton, I'm not in the right condition to scatter the flowers of rhetoric over the garden of my remarks; but will you marry me? Pardon my abruptness, but please don't refuse me. I—I—I—I—I—I—love you. There, as the man said about the pulled tooth, that's the best thing out. Now you won't refuse me, will you?

NANCY. But suppose I should refuse you?

MINER. Why, then I'll—I'll—yes, I'll discard you. And I would discard any girl that gave me the mitten. But I love you.

NANCY. Love me? Why, love is like the fellowship among the religious denominations—a drop of love to a gallon of sectarian stew.

MINER. No, no; not so! Love, like the ocean, rolls on forever. As Daniel Webster said the first time he ascended Mt. Washington, the clouds — the — the clouds — the —

NANCY. Yes; that is a cloudy subject. A little light on the question seems appropriate. Can you support a wife?

MINER. Certainly I can. I'm not like a balloon, without any visible means of support. My uncle was a grocer; and he left me the fortune he made in a small way.

NANCY. Left you the scales in which the small weigh was made?

MINER. Oh, come, come, Nancy; don't tantalize me any more, but say yes. And have you forgotten the times when we made mud-pies together? And don't you remember how fond you were of my apples and pears and cherries. And you certainly recollect how nearly I came to breaking my neck when I was trying to get you some chestnuts. But we had the chestnuts all the same. Yes; we are old chestnuts.

NANCY. What! are you my little Miner?

MINER. No! I'm your big Miner. Now you won't refuse me. You can't, you know. Come, say yes at once.

NANCY. You must give me time to think. Marriage, as you well know, is a very serious matter.

MINER. Yes; any one can tell that by looking at the bald-headed husbands in (*naming the locality*). Immense amount of hair squandered in family disputes. But if you marry me, you'll not be in the condition of old farmer Littlesouls' wife. He says, "when I married my wife, she hadn't a rag to her back, but now she's covered with 'em." Come now, how much longer must I tease and entreat you? Some one will walk in in a minute and cut us both off in the prime of life. Don't keep me longer in expense — I mean suspense. Come, let's get in a rage next Sabbath.

NANCY. Get in a rage?

MINER. Yes; marriage! (*Extends his hand.*) Your hand, Nancy, your hand.

NANCY. And what can you want with my hand?

MINER. Keep it. So handy to have another hand in the house. Why, don't you remember how I drove off the cow that was trying to hook you when you wore that little red cape? And then while I was helping you across the big brook, I went in all over, and you fished me out and called me your pond-shiner.

NANCY. But you are no longer a shiner. You're a whale.

MINER. Yes, and I'll whale the first man that lays any claim to you; whale him so there'll be plenty of blubber. And don't forget that we engaged ourselves to each other the very day we saved each other from the cow and the pond. And — I hear some one. Your hand. (*Extends his hand.*)

NANCY. Yes, it is Kitty Mason's step.

(MINER takes NANCY'S hand; puts thumb of other hand in his vest arm-hole, tips back and whistles or hums a tune as KITTY MASON enters.)

KITTY. Please, sir, if you please —

MINER. Yes; many thanks for your salutations. I am well pleased,

exceedingly well pleased ; in fact, I can truly say, and express but a mere tithe of my happiness, that I was never before half as well pleased as I am at this supreme moment.

KITTY. Then allow me to congratulate you, and that most cordially.

MINER. A thousand thanks ! And don't forget to congratulate Miss Norton likewise.

KITTY. With all my heart. (*Kisses NANCY.*)

MINER. Oh, aggravation ! Why did you not ask me to do the saluting business ? Allow me to show you just how it should be done. You shall be the witness of this case in court.

KITTY. No, thank you ; time for me to leave. (*Exit.*)

MINER. Case in court — I should say courting case without a witness.

NANCY. No, sir. Not on such short acquaintance. It isn't at all proper, you know. (*Holds her hands before her face.*)

MINER (*taking both of NANCY'S hands*). Short acquaintance ? We are no shorter than other people. Not proper ? No ; kiss, buss, smack, and salute are common nouns. (*Is about to kiss NANCY, when DAVID enters.*)

DAVID. Oh, don't mind me. I have not only noticed nothing that is going on, but I haven't the slightest suspicion of anything that is going on. I'm so nearly deaf and my eyes are so poor, that I can't distinguish a little smack from a seventy-four gun ship. (*MINER and NANCY rise.*)

MINER. Good on your head, David. The first time I ever heard you talk sensible nonsense in the presence of a lady. Miss Norton, allow me to present my bachelor friend, David Jones. My affianced bride, Mr. Jones. And you know the rules of etiquette in saluting a *fiancée*. Always the right cheek. Where you kiss the left cheek, you get left, nothing but left cheek. What, tearing yourself away, so quickly ? (*Exit DAVID.*) He's all left.

NANCY. I thought him a friend of yours. Whatever is the matter ?

MINER. Too cheeky subject. One of the most bashful old bachelors I ever met. Wants to leave his property to some girl, but hardly dares to speak with one. I wish some young lady, worthy of such good fortune, would propose to become his adopted daughter, and with sufficient tact and courage to make the scheme a grand success. He's seventy, rich, good-natured, and a monomaniac on this one subject ; and the scheme would pay every way. And, Nancy, do you know what the old widower said when his pastor remarked that the church embraced nearly four times as many ladies as gentlemen ?

NANCY. No. What was it ?

MINER. Why, he said there was four times as much fun in embracing ladies. And I believe he was right. And now that no one is near, I'll take that kiss out of which I was so shamefully cheated.

(*MINER extends his arms towards NANCY, but looks around to see that no one is near, when DAVID again enters. NANCY sees*

him and exit. DAVID takes her place and is clasped in the arms of MINER, who, taking in the situation, looks disgusted, while DAVID slowly breaks into a laugh, and exclaims, "The regular old [mention some familiar locality] hug."

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *The same as in Act I. ABNER and CONRAD walk in as KITTY enters.*

CONRAD. The Yankee is gone, bag and baggage. Went to his room, which is vacant. I'm sure I heard him leave the house. (*Exit.*)

ABNER. Good! Kitty Mason, you are in my power this time at all events. But it is not too late to make me your best friend. Be my wife and all will be well, Seeing that you cannot help yourself, why not yield gracefully to manifest destiny?

KITTY. Well, I will consent, seeing there is no help for it. And now that I do consent, and so readily, be a man and leave me until we settle matters to-morrow.

ABNER (*advancing*). Are you really sincere? If so, I shall be very lenient. (*Aside.*) I believe it's a ruse to gain time.

KITTY. Thanks for your promise. But how is this? What do you mean? I warn you to keep your proper distance.

ABNER. Well, seeing that you are to become my wife, I will be liberal. Only seal the compact with the kiss which that infernal Yankee cheated me out of. Again, I say, submit to manifest destiny; for I cannot trust you without that seal attached to the bargain.

KITTY. Then you will not be merciful? You will insist upon that foolish pledge?

ABNER. I must insist; but only as a pledge of your sincerity. I will be as reasonable and merciful as circumstances will permit. But certainly this single seal of the compact is neither unreasonable nor unmerciful. (ABNER *advances*.) Submit! I command you to submit! You are in my power.

KITTY. Then listen to the whole sentence which I did not finish. I consent, I most willingly and gladly consent, to be your — yes, Abner, your, and only your mortal enemy for life.

(KITTY *attempts to flee, but is caught by ABNER, when ORLANDO AUGUSTUS enters; ABNER turns, still holding the arm of KITTY.*)

ORLANDO (*raising his eye-glasses*). Aw, beg pardon for the interruption. Quite a scwimmage, I declare! Wegular Donnybwook fight. Aw, I bet — stake, I should say — my money — aw — on — on the young female. Wegular Joan of Arc — aw, perfect Maid of Sawagossa in calico.

ABNER. Your impertinence, sir, is ill-timed, and only equalled by the shallowness of your pate.

ORLANDO (*raising eye-glass*). Aw, perfect tiger! Wegular catamount! Aw, go on with the scwimmage; don't let me interwupt you. I alter my bet. Aw, this time I stake one and sixpence on the fewocious male party in the contest. Aw, weally believe he would conquer the young woman unless the Maid of Sawagossa is weinforced. I do, 'pon honor.

ABNER. Impertinent puppy, vacate this room! If in one minute you do not make yourself scarce, I'll break every bone in your body. Away! I say, away!

ORLANDO. Why, what a disagweable fellow! Aw, now, do be weasonable. I can't go, because I must stay all night. Aw, spoil my new clothes, all that sort of thing, you know, to sleep out of doors. Take cold, too. I weally should, 'pon honor.

ABNER. This is too much. Villain! rascal! fool! Go! go! I say.

ORLANDO. Aw, fewocious as a Modoc Indian. Aw, forgot you were standing in the presence of Orlando Augustus, who—aw—never permits any one to couple dewogatory adjectives with his Chwistian cognomen. He weally don't, 'pon honor.

ABNER. And pray, you villainous puppy, what do you do?

ORLANDO. Aw, I call them out—aw—duel; all that sort of thing, you know. Beneath my dignity to fight with a clodhopper; but—aw—sink my pride and challenge you. I do weally, 'pon honor.

ABNER. I accept. Do you hear, sir? Accept at once. Appoint a funeral, and I'll furnish the corpse.

ORLANDO. Aw, getting weasonable; you weally are. Aw, I appoint a funeral. Your funeral, you know, aw—you furnish the corpse. (*Eye-glass.*) Poorer than number five mackewel; but better than none at all. Aw, give me gweat pleasure to attend. Pwospect of gweat happiness in store. Aw, quite a gala day; all that sort of thing, you know.

ABNER. Impudent puppy, did you ever fire a pistol?

ORLANDO (*drawing a pistol*). Aw, weally, now, if the lady will permit, I will show you your certain fate; I weally will, to oblige you. You see that spool on that frame in the corner? Aw, I place myself here at the opposite corner and pick it off just as I shall pick you off. I weally will, 'pon honor.

(ORLANDO fires, and the spool drops. *Spool can be made to fall by a thread attached to it.*)

ORLANDO. You furnish the corpse; all that sort of thing, you know. If the lady does not object, settle it now. Aw, not been to supper; set a good appetite; always does when I shoot a clodhopper. Aw, I mean a cowardly mule who lays violent hands on a lady.

ABNER (*aside*). What can I do? Sure death to fight with pistols. (*Aloud.*) I never fight with pistols; and as I am the challenged party, I choose swords, or what is just as well, clubs.

ORLANDO. Aw, clubs twumps. Happy to accommodate you. Gweat pleasure ; all that sort of thing, you know. As you supply the corpse, you can furnish any kind you choose. Sorry the corpse will be black and blue from head to foot ; but I can't be wesponsible for the wesult. I weally can't, you know, 'pon honor.

KITTY (*breaks from ABNER, and springs to the side of ORLANDO*). Protect me ! protect me ! Save me from that vile monster, and I will bless you forever.

(*ABNER steps forward to secure KITTY, when ORLANDO raises his pistol and ABNER steps back.*)

ORLANDO. Aw, must insist. Very unhealthy to meddle with ladies in my pwesence. It weally is, 'pon honor.

ABNER. By what right do you interfere between this lady and myself ?

ORLANDO. Every lady is — aw — under my pwotection who has no other pwotector. (*Eye-glass.*) Perfect gazelle in calico ; fwightened fawn ! She weally is, 'pon honor.

ABNER (*aside*). I am foiled at every turn. If I call Conrad, I shall be shot. Miner has found his Nancy Norton at last, and I might as well reckon him on the other side. Reckoning the two women, the forces are about equal. If this puppy presses me to fight, I can probably beat him with clubs, as we have no swords. Stratagem, however, is my best game, after all the parties have retired for the night.

ORLANDO. Allow me to suggest — aw — pwopose that you we-tire from these wough scenes, Miss Gazelle in calico. This cweature, whose big bwavery only wises to the sublime and lofty height of fwightening timid females and timid twiplings, shall not harm a hair of your head. West easy while the Honowable Orlando Augustus is near to pwotect the fwightened fawn. Twust me that after our duel he will be in the pitiable condition of a sick kitten longing for a hot soapstone to lean against, and the attentions of a sympathetic nurse. He weally will, 'pon honor.

ABNER. Curse your vile tongue ! Bring on the clubs !

(*ORLANDO escorts KITTY from the room. ABNER paces the stage.*)

ABNER. I must try to frighten that puppy. I have a great mind to murder the aggravating dude ; but that won't do by a long shot. I wonder what infernal spirit threw Kitty in my way to revive again that passion I imagined dead and buried months ago. Why in heaven's name am I tempted more than flesh and blood can stand ? Why do I not flee from this house, instead of remaining in the very jaws of a temptation that has almost spoiled me of what manhood and decency I had left ? I see the way of escape, yet persistently face my doom ; for success itself would prove my worst Waterloo of defeat. I realize fully that in a certain sense I alone am to blame ; yet I rush to my fate. An hour longer, and I believe I could murder both Kitty and Lionel in my insane folly. Only some kind providence can save me. An hour ago, had some one so

much as hinted that I would have sunk so low, I should have replied, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" I could have borne one burden; but to lose both my intended wife and my sister! yes, it was too mighty to be borne. I yield to manifest destiny. Where is that contemptible puppy? Come on! Delay another moment, and I take my oath to murder you! Ah! here you come, sir! Do you know that I have murdered three men in duels?

ORLANDO (*re-entering*). Aw, must have been appwentices. Pwepare to die. Are you weady to furnish the, aw, bwused weed of a corpse? (*Hands one club to ABNER.*)

ABNER. Hark you! Myname is Abner Mills. You have certainly heard of the hero of a hundred duels!

ORLANDO. Aw, I do wecall an Abner who, in the time of King David, was slain by the mighty Joab. I am the modern Joab to slay the pwesent Abner. I weally am, 'pon honor.

ABNER. Curse your impudence! Are you ready?

ORLANDO. Only waiting till you gather a little courage to meet your fate. A twife impatient to knock a hole in your pate, but give you a moment of life to accommodate; all that sort of thing, you know. I weally do, 'pon honor.

ABNER. Oh, let's fight and have done with this baby talk!

(ABNER and ORLANDO advance, feint, fight. ORLANDO'S club is knocked from his hand.)

ABNER. Well, my pretty little Joab, Abner is still alive. Promise to leave this house, or die. Go, and I will spare you.

ORLANDO. Aw, I couldn't think of it; 'pon honor, I weally could not.

ABNER. Another instant and I will break your skull!

(ABNER, seemingly about to strike, puts club over his shoulder to get a longer swing, when ORLANDO suddenly springs forward, grasps the club behind, and wrenches it from ABNER'S grasp, swings it around his head, etc., when he is grasped behind by CONRAD, who has cautiously entered.)

CONRAD. Shall I kill the dude?

ABNER. No, no, no; for heaven's sake, no! Tie his hands.

CONRAD. Just as you say; but I think the safest way for us is to get rid of him.

ABNER. That's just the way never to get rid of him till we hang for it, unless we are shot, lynched, or put in prison before it comes to that. No, don't even harm the brainless idiot, but bind and gag him till we leave.

(ABNER and CONRAD drag off ORLANDO. Enter NANCY, MINER, and NELLIE BLY.)

MINER. I've caught it! I've caught it!

NANCY. Caught what? the measles, or a rabbit?

MINER. A fox, by jingo! Excuse me, ladies; 'tis not often I swear, but I couldn't help it; I've got just the plan.

NANCY. What is it?

MINER. Oh! how I do like to excite curiosity!

NELLIE. Well, you have succeeded to a shaving. What is it? What is it?

NANCY. Yes, yes; what is it?

MINER. Well, I have told you all about our rich old bachelor, David Jones, with his mortal fear of all womankind, and that this very day he expressed his great regret that he had not only neither sister nor niece, but not even a very young female acquaintance to whom he would like to leave his property. And yet he is determined to will his property to a young lady. He is a monomaniac on that subject. Now, all he needs is my indorsement and a little coaxing; yes, a little judicious coaxing. Now, Miss Bly, —

NELLIE. Nellie, if you please.

MINER. And now, Miss Nellie, it's St. Valentine's Day, leap year. See? Behold? Catch on? Perceive any hole in a ladder? And are you gazing between the rounds of said ladder at the magnificent scenery?

NELLIE. Yes; I discern an immense landscape, beautiful beyond compare. I see my victim. I behold a very bashful old bachelor ready to run at the first fire. He needs cultivating. All he requires is judicious cultivation. I will be the cultivator. Not hearts, but spades are trumps. I hold the spade. In a word, I am the granger; and I make hay while the sun shines. I open the spring work by springing my agricultural plan. He resists; endeavors to defend himself; attempts to make a retrograde movement. I head him off. He surrenders at discretion. I compel him to accept me as his *protégée*, or daughter. He becomes my adopted father or protector. Both are highly elated. Grand finale! I, who never knew a father, find one. Here the fountain plays; band strikes up. Happy all round. Red lights. Tableau.

MINER (*clapping his hands, in which NANCY joins*). Bravo! bravo! Hail to the daughter of the granger who in triumph advances upon the old fortress of Bachelor's Hall! Success awaits us. And how fortunate! Hush! here he comes like a lamb to the slaughter, or as a bird into the snare of the fowler. (*Enter DAVID.*) Ladies, allow me to present my friend David Jones. Mr. Jones, my affianced bride and former playmate, Miss Nancy Norton; and Miss Norton's most intimate friend, Miss Nelly Bly; small in bulk, yet great in purity, innocence, goodness, and worth, and armed with a true maidenly courage not born of St. Valentine's Day, nor leap year, but for all occasions; equalled by few, excelled by none.

DAVID (*greatly confused*). Yes — yes — happy — yes, very happy to meet you. I don't remember being more overwhelmed with — with — (*Aside.*) What shall I say? Oh! for a lodge in some vast wilderness, where rumor of successful and unsuccessful

women might never reach me more! No chance to run! Why don't the earth open and swallow me up? (*Aloud.*) Ladies and women, most happy to — to —

NELLIE. To see us, especially me. I knew you would be.

DAVID. Oh, of course I am, very — yes; especially — No, I mean particularly yourself. I think I never met one I detested — no, I so emphatically persisted in taking a fancy to as I do to — to —

NELLIE. To me; and I'm so glad; for I have taken a particular strong liking for you. And I would so love to shake hands with you, Mr. Jones! (*Extends her hand.*)

DAVID. Oh, certainly, by all means; nothing so charming as to — to — (*Hands NELLIE his hat.*) If there is one thing more than another I fairly dote on, it is shaking hands. (*Aside.*) I'm sweating at every pore. I could stand it if that infernal Miner and his true-love were not ready to die with suppressed laughter. I'll strangle that Miner before I'm twenty years older!

MINER. Excuse Miss Norton and me; we have a particular engagement to meet Miss Mason. (*Exeunt MINER and NANCY.*)

DAVID (*aside*). And leave me helpless and alone with a female girl? Not if I've been introduced to myself. Fire and brimstone! if I haven't handed her my hat instead of shaking hands with her! (*Aloud.*) My dear — dear — oh, dear — I mean, could you spare me my hat a moment while I call on a sick neighbor that I promised to visit. I'm awful — I mean very kind to the sick and afflicted; I am very; and I must call, you know, because — because —

NELLIE (*aside*). Well, this beats all my sisters and my cousins and my aunts! But I've promised, and he shall not escape me. (*Aloud.*) Why, Mr. Jones, you forget that you are not within a hundred miles of your home. Now please be seated a moment or two, for I have something in particular to say to you; and we've not a moment to lose. Somebody will be here in a moment and interrupt our little *tête-à-tête*.

(DAVID *sinks helplessly into a chair*. NELLIE *draws her chair very close*. DAVID *moves off*, while NELLIE *draws her chair closer.*)

NELLIE. Now, Mr. Jones, you have a large, roomy, handsome, but lonesome dwelling; and you need a girl, or a young lady like me, for a companion. Now just imagine yourself as captain and me as chief mate; and how nice that would be!

DAVID. Oh, delightful! perfectly lovely! — I mean — mean — (*Aside.*) The girl is either making love to me, or else she's making game of my gray hairs. Blow me, if I'll stand it! Brace up, David! Brace up, you rich old bachelor! Here goes! Who's afraid? (*Aloud.*) I say, Miss Nellie, I'm a very stern man. I have an awful habit of swearing, that I fear would be extremely unpleasant to you. Happy! oh, very happy to secure you; but my drinking habits would soon wear you out. Why, I have no hesita-

tion in saying that in less than six months I should bring down your gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. Oh! I could not think of accepting your proposal, however flattering and delightful on my part. It pains me to say so, but I'm not fit for you. I'm not cross to-night, but I am horrible every time I go on a spree. No, I couldn't think of making you unhappy. I have a wonderful admiration for you. My love is very strong, but for your sake I must refuse you. You can't help seeing what an unhappy union ours would prove. (*Reaches for his hat.*)

NELLIE. Does the old gray-headed bach. imagine I am popping the question? Well, I should smile! But I will not become the laughing-stock for Nancy and her beau without another struggle. I must come off victor. (*Aloud.*) No, Mr. Jones, you can't have your hat till we clear up this little misunderstanding. I was informed that you were an old bachelor, and that you had neither sister nor niece. I couldn't become your sister or niece; but I took a liking for you, and thought if you would adopt me as your daughter, and — and —

DAVID (*gradually breaking into a laugh*). What an old fool I am, to be sure. (*Laughs again.*) Well, that's a good one! He! he! ho! ho! I shall die! and you weren't looking after a husband at all?

NELLIE. I after a husband! Well, I never! And pray what would a mere girl like me do with a husband?

DAVID. Why, boss the lucky dog. If he didn't love, honor, and obey you, serve him thus. (*Takes hold of NELLIE's ear.*)

NELLIE. I'd a great deal rather boss a good old dad.

DAVID (*smiles*). Miss Nellie.

NELLIE. Yes; that's my name.

DAVID. I'll adopt you.

NELLIE. But, Mr. Jones, have you forgotten how — how — you always are at certain times? Oh, I couldn't think of living with you.

DAVID. Come now, that's too bad! Why, you must be my daughter. Now you wouldn't think it, but I am almost seventy, and liable to drop off at any moment with heart disease. I can't live long, and then where will my property go to?

NELLIE. What! seventy, and still grasping for money? On your way to dig for gold?

DAVID. Dig for gold! Well, I should laugh. I wielding a pickaxe and spade! Going to buy up some mining-stock on purpose to leave you the profits.

NELLIE. But you are such a profane man! No, Mr. Jones, not I.

DAVID. Who said I was profane?

NELLIE. I was certainly told so.

DAVID. Just tell me who the rascal is, and I'll horsewhip him.

NELLIE. Then you drink so! No, Mr. Jones, no drunkard for me.

DAVID. What! I drink so? Who is the slanderer?

NELLIE. Then you have such an outrageous temper when intoxicated! No, Mr. Jones, none in mine, if you please. Tea and coffee will suffice. You would bring my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave.

DAVID. Oh! I shall go insane! If I were only a playactor, how I would lash into high tragedy to-night. Say Richard III. or Macbeth. Oh! give me something to tear; a handkerchief or something that I could rend and tear easy, while I search for my vile calumniator, slanderer, backbiter, dastardly villain! I'm getting old, but this is too much; and I believe, yes, I assure you, Miss Nellie, that somebody is going to get hurt, I think I may say, quite badly bruised, before I'm ten years older.

NELLIE. Please calm yourself, Mr. Jones, while I —

DAVID. Name the vile wretch. Name him.

NELLIE. Name who? Why, listen a moment.

DAVID. Not a day! — I mean, not a second. Name the base slanderer.

NELLIE. Well, if I must out with it, the two first letters of his name are David Jones.

DAVID. Why, what supreme nonsense is this? You don't refer to me? (*Gradually breaks into a laugh.*)

NELLIE. Was it not you who but a moment ago told me you indulged in streams of the purest profanity? that you drank hard? was disagreeably cross when drunk? and that —

DAVID. Oh, come now, can't you see into a joke?

NELLIE. But you were not joking, not a bit of it.

DAVID (*stammers excitedly*). But — er — but — er — but — er —

NELLIE. Butter! Why, that's my boarding mistress's strongest point.

DAVID (*laughs*). Ha! ha! ha! Well, that's a good one. Ho! ho! he! he! Oh, I shall die. (*Laughs till he commences coughing; NELLIE pats him on the back.*) That was a capital joke, and you were merely paying off an old score. (*Aside.*) Never kissed anybody but my mother in my life, but I have a great mind to break the record. A few laps ahead wouldn't be bad. Bo — hoo — hoo — Who's afraid? By all that is lovely, here goes. One kiss, or I perish in the attempt. (*Takes NELLIE'S hands, and is about to kiss her, when MINER enters.*)

MINER. Oh, don't mind me. I have not only not noticed anything that is going on, but I have not the slightest suspicion of anything that is going on. I'm nearly deaf, and as for my eyes, they can't distinguish a little smack from a seventy-four gun. ship. Good-evening; I'm off. (*Exit.*)

DAVID. Good riddance! Why, I shall murder that fellow before I'm ninety. But now for that buss — Excuse me, I mean a — a —

(*DAVID looks around to see if the coast is clear, when re-enter MINER; NELLIE sees him and runs off; MINER takes her*

place, and DAVID embraces him and is about to kiss him when he discovers his mistake. Business. MINER laughs, while DAVID is disgusted, but gradually breaks into a fit of laughing. Exeunt both; as enter POLLY MILLS; short dress, soft hat with feather; also gun, hatchet in belt, game bag at her side.)

POLLY. Knocked seventeen miles and two laps. No answer. Enter Polly Mills; and here I am. Where can my chum, Molly Brown, have wandered to? Fired seven times to attract her notice, and no response from Molly. Well, never mind, she'll see the signs and follow; or, if not, I'll follow her in the morning. I wonder what kind of a hotel this is. I'm not particularly pleased with the appearance of things. But here's my gun, tomahawk, and, best of all, Polly Mills. Oh, yes, I'm here. I'm right here. It's a singular fact that when I'm in any particular place, I'm almost invariably there; and some people are apt to find it out, if there's any occasion to let some people know. And yet Molly and I are about the mildest ladies that ever wore ladies' boots. Molly and I must have lost our reckoning when we shot those wild turkeys; and she must have run off, chasing after that turkey gobbler. This must be ten miles from our home. But hark! hush! Sh-h-h! I hear steps and men's voices. I'll just hide behind this, and watch and listen. (*Conceals herself.*)

(*Enter ABNER and CONRAD.*)

CONRAD. Well, well, well, suppose I am smitten with that pretty huntress, and all over at first sight, what of it? Have you so soon forgotten all about your own sudden passion for Kitty Mason? A passion so foolish, so wild, so silly, so perfectly insane, that were it any other man on earth, I should leave him to his folly and his sure destruction for his most horrible crime. But we have sworn to stand by each other through thick and thin, and although you are the champion idiot in love, I have not thought of swerving. And yet you prepare to desert me before a shot is fired. However, seeing that you are both traitor and coward, let's quit, call it square, and have done with all truces.

ABNER. What under heaven are you talking about? You know that I'm neither truce-breaker nor coward. I haven't shown the white feather yet. While I do not mean to throw my life away, did you not find me standing my ground? What you term cowardice was simply my desire not to harm that dude more than we were obliged to. You are no braver than I, but merely more foolhardy in your greater defiance of the law. Now understand, once for all, that I'm not particularly in love; but she refused me and humbled me, and I will, I must, turn the tables and humble her. Truce-breaker? Never! If you must have this pretty huntress, say so, and I'll aid you to the extent of my power.

CONRAD. Forgive me; for I'm not myself, but in love. The thought of my lost sister prevents me from insulting a lady, except

to redeem my promise to you. But you should have wed my sister; for she loved you dearly, and looked sufficiently like Kitty to be her twin sister. And I wonder that the fond remembrance of your lost sister will even allow you to seriously entertain the idea of abducting a lady. I would not have believed you could. Had I been in your place, I should have murdered that dude; but when it comes to women, nothing but our mutual oaths to each other permits me to assist in your dastardly love affair; understand that. But that charming fairy of a huntress must have passed this way. I'm rather bashful, generally speaking; but this is a case of life and death. I'm smitten to the very heart's core. I wonder who and what she can be. I'll stop here and reconnoitre. (*Exit ABNER.*)

POLLY (*looks cautiously from her place of concealment*). Oh, that is the little game, is it? I'm the game, am I? I'm to be brought down by a few arrows from the bow of Cupid. Well, I like that. I'm his gazelle — no, his dear deer. Dear me, what fools these mortals of the male gender be! Lords of creation! Stronger sex! We are all turtle-doves, are we? Young man, did it ever occur to you that there are such things as eagles' nests? Well, you have dropped into an eagle's eyrie this time. Oh, I'll teach you to fall in love with Polly Mills. It will take about five minutes to take the conceit out of you. Eagles have talons, and they don't always wear kid gloves.

(*POLLY steps out and CONRAD turns and discovers her.*)

CONRAD (*aside*). The very huntress herself. (*Aloud.*) Good-evening, Miss; may I ask your name? My name is Brown, and entirely at your service.

POLLY. You may address me as Miss Polly, if you please. Are you the host?

CONRAD. No; Miss Catherine Mason is the owner of this dwelling. I'm merely a guest, like yourself.

POLLY. I had hoped that you were the host; for, judging from your manner and appearance, I should count on the very best accommodations the house affords. (*Aside.*) There is taffy spread on thick; and now we'll see how it takes.

CONRAD (*aside*). That's not bad to take. Conrad, you are all right. Go in and win. (*Aloud.*) It gives me the liveliest pleasure, I assure you, to have gained your good opinion at first sight. I should be one of the happiest of men did I not fear you were somewhat given to flattery.

POLLY. Flattery! I don't even quite comprehend the meaning of the word flattery, I assure you. I took you for a gentleman, and my opinions are not easily changed.

CONRAD (*aside*). Rustic beauty! Simplicity in petticoats! Perfectly unsophisticated lass! Innocent of all guile! Ah, perfect treasure! Here goes. (*Aloud.*) Miss Polly, I have taken a great fancy for you, and I hope you are not offended at my frankness in telling you so. You are as beautiful as the fairest prairie or forest

flower, and I doubt not your young heart is as beautiful and pure as your face is lovely. I hope you are not offended.

POLLY. Offended! Offended at what? Soft solder, as my friend Mollie terms it, is due our sex. But I trust you are merely uttering your honest sentiments; and if so, make yourself easy on that score. (*Aside.*) Taffy all around. He's good-looking, but he can't shine here.

CONRAD. Please, Miss Polly, will you be seated? I have a few words I would like to say to you. (*Both take seats.*)

POLLY. Why, those are the very words Abijah Comstock used when he was about to pop the question.

CONRAD. And did you accept him?

POLLY. Accept Abijah Comstock? Why, I wouldn't marry Abijah Comstock if he lay dead on our door-step. Abijah was a very good-looking and a very nice young man. I rather liked Abijah also; but do you know we ladies are not obliged to marry everybody we like?

CONRAD. But suppose that a man you liked very much could not live without you.

POLLY. Oh, that's what they all say; but I've refused — let me see — Abijah, Benjamin, Charley, Daniel, Ezekiel, Fred, Goodwin, and — and — I believe that's all so far. They come along so fast that I can hardly keep run of them. How many did you make? — seven?

CONRAD. Yes, that's the number.

POLLY. Well then, you're right; because seven is the number so far 'as I have got. And not one death yet. All alive and in good health.

CONRAD. Well, but, Miss Polly, they could not have loved as I love. Please don't refuse me, but take time to think of it; and if you have any doubts, give me the benefit of each doubt. I love you with all my heart; and I offer you my heart and hand.

POLLY. Well, you make the eighth offer. I wonder who the ninth one will be. But I believe I like you best of all. I must own that I think I would accept you if you could be satisfied with me; but I should worry your very life out of you by my temper. Oh, I'm just raving mad and crazy with passion when I am waked up. Now, you just try me. Just call me a good-for-nothing trollop, and I'll show you just my style in about two-thirds of a half of a spell.

CONRAD. Oh, but I couldn't call you by such a name.

POLLY. But you must, to please me, so I can show you just my disposition.

CONRAD. Oh, but I will not, you know.

POLLY (*excitedly*). What! you will not? Do you dare cross me in that way?

CONRAD. Oh, please don't get angry with me. I mean no harm.

POLLY. Mean no harm! You are just as mean and hateful as you can be. Now, you've just riled me up, and you'd better not,

and don't you forget it. Why, when I get waked up, I rave, I tear, I scream, I yell, I strike, I box, I cuff, I almost tomahawk (*raising her hatchet*) a man — I — I —

CONRAD (*jumping up*). Well, don't tomahawk me.

POLLY. But I must if you cross me, you know. When we marry I must always have my own way. Do you hear?

CONRAD. Oh, yes; you needn't scream so; I hear.

POLLY. And will you always do just what I tell you?

CONRAD. Of course I will, and more too. I always intended to; of course I did.

POLLY. True's you live and breathe?

CONRAD. Yes; true's I'm a live man. (*Aside.*) I wonder how long I should live with such a she-wolf. Rustic beauty! Unsophisticated innocence, in a horn. Simplicity personified with a vengeance.

POLLY. Well, what are ye muttering to yourself?

CONRAD. Oh, nothing only a little funny — funny —

POLLY. Funny! Just show me anything funny!

CONRAD. Oh, not at all; nothing funny, I assure you. I never saw anything with less fun in it. (*Attempts to go away; but POLLY takes him by the ear and leads him to a seat.*)

POLLY. Trying to run away, are you, just like all the other seven? Now look me right in the face.

(*A good deal of business during several speeches.*)

CONRAD. Oh, certainly, certainly.

POLLY. Come, come, you're dodging, and you're eyes are wandering all over the room. Look me right in the face. Do you wish to marry me?

CONRAD. Oh, certainly I do. I couldn't live without you.

POLLY. Shut up, I say. Don't put in any extras, but answer my questions. Where are your eyes? Now straight in the face! You mean business?

CONRAD. Yes, I mean anything you want.

POLLY. Honor bright? Next Sunday you marry me?

CONRAD. Honor bright. Next Sunday.

POLLY. Then it's a bargain. Now let us have your whole name. Come, be quick about it.

CONRAD. Conrad Brown of Sterling village, State of — Why, what is the matter? You're pale as death.

POLLY. Were you a chum of — of — Abner Mills?

CONRAD. I not only was, but I am. Blast me, if the little she-wolf hasn't fainted dead away. (*Fans her in a very awkward, excited manner.*) Coming to? Well, that's right. What's the matter?

POLLY. Then you wasn't drowned with my brother in Lake Michigan?

CONRAD. Not much; but who are you?

POLLY. Polly Mills, sister of Abner Mills. Why, how pale you are! Don't faint. (*They grasp each other's hands.*)

CONRAD. Not I. And you are not drowned either?

POLLY. I drowned?

CONRAD. No, of course you were not. And did you see my poor sister Molly go down?

POLLY. Poor sister go down? She's alive and well, and but for getting astray, would have been with me to-night. But how pale you are.

CONRAD. Alive and well! My sweet sister Molly alive and well? And I shall see her again? And, Polly?

POLLY. Yes, Conrad.

CONRAD. And are you so changed? If so, don't you think you could just change back again, for my sake, and be the good little Polly I used to think you was; just the nicest little piece of feminine gender that ever wore calico?

POLLY. What! can't see into that joke yet? I shall be obliged to give you another lesson. (*Raising the hatchet and speaking louder as she proceeds, but smiling occasionally.*) Must I nearly tomahawk you again? Do you mean to accuse me of changing when I haven't changed one particle, but am the same fun-loving Polly, who used to play tag and order you round because you loved to be ordered round by me? Do you hear me? Look me right in the face! Do you hear me?

CONRAD (*putting hand to his ear*). Did you whisper to me then, or did I hear a small thunder-clap? Ah! I have it! You overheard my talk and were getting square with me. Yes; that's it. Well, and I shouldn't wonder at all if you have. (*Taking POLLY by both hands.*) Haven't changed a particle, have you? And you and I never break our word, do we?

POLLY. Never break our word! What do you mean?

CONRAD. Why, you know we are pledged to get married next Sunday. Hold, hold now! No interruption; for it's all settled for next Sabbath. And fortunately your brother Abner is even now in this house — and — and — Well, I never; if the lump of goodness has not fainted dead away just as I was on the point of trying to kiss her. I mentioned her brother, whom she supposed dead, too abruptly. However, here comes in that same old kiss. May I kiss you? Silence gives consent, as the man said who kissed the deaf and dumb girl.

(CONRAD *is about to kiss POLLY when ABNER enters.*)

ABNER. Oh, go ahead, Conrad. Don't mind me; but while she is in a faint improve your opportunity. All is fair in war and love, you know.

POLLY (*springs from the chair*). Abner! my brother Abner! You were not drowned; and I see you once more alive!

(*They grasp each other by both hands. Business.*)

ABNER. What! my own sister Polly, whom I have mourned as dead. Heaven be praised! And just in time to save me from an awful crime.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *Same as Acts I. and II.*

(*Enter MOLLIE BROWN in short dress, soft hat with feather, gun, etc.*)

MOLLIE. Well, here I am at last, as sure as my name is Mollie Brown. And where is Polly Mills? Come, Polly, show yourself. Hello! where are you? Saw your signs and followed right here and into this house.

(*Enter ABNER.*)

MOLLIE (*aside*). What! Abner Mills not drowned? Yet I saw him and my brother go down before my very eyes. But I could not mourn; for it saved him from wedding my rival, Kitty Mason. But perhaps they are married and living together in this very house. Now, if she could have taken Lionel Forrest and left Abner to me! But no, the course of true love did never yet run smooth; and my jealousy soon informed me of their love for each other. But now that fate has thrown us again together, I will endeavor to learn the present state of affairs. Fortunately he utterly fails to recognize me. But how he stares at me, just as though he had lost half his wits! Let me just get up all my courage. I wonder how I'd best begin. (*She takes a turn across the room.*)

ABNER (*aside*). Mollie Brown, as I live! Looks just as she used to. I loved her at first sight; but she always avoided me, and I followed in the wake of Kitty to excite her jealousy. But the more I followed Kitty the more Molly avoided me, until, disgusted, I actually fell in love with Kitty herself. But Kitty and I are done forever. And I would not believe it, yet, nevertheless, at sight of her, all my old love for Mollie is aroused. She don't look like a married woman. She seems intensely interested in me. I'll just see how she will conduct herself if I remain sort of passive. Ah, I have it! It's a great misfortune to become hard of hearing; yet I voluntarily become about the deafest man in all (*naming the place of performance*). (*Aloud.*) Please be seated, madam. (*ABNER hands her a chair which she takes, and he seats himself beside her.*)

MOLLIE. Thank you. (*Aside.*) He does know me; but I'll not let him know that I so much as mistrust that he does. (*Aloud.*) Do you reside here?

ABNER. Nothing the matter with my ear; only I'm a trifle deaf. Only a trifle, so don't speak too loud.

MOLLIE (*rather loud*). Do you live here?

ABNER. Not the slightest cause for fear. Good, safe place!

MOLLIE. I'll fetch him this time. (*Quite loud.*) Are you a miner or a lumberman?

ABNER. Yes, yes; you've guessed it. Lost my hearing on Lake Michigan. Was nearly drowned. (*Aside.*) She knows me; but I'll not let on.

MOLLIE. What a misfortune ! Poor Abner ! how I pity him ! But love, genuine love, will endure all things. Who could bear with his misfortunes except me ? (*Loud.*) How is your health ?

ABNER. Oh, yes ; some wealth. Enough to support a wife, but not extravagantly.

MOLLIE. That's not a bad hit. Now, I'll learn if he is married or going to be. (*Loud.*) Wife and family, I suppose. Married, are you not, and residing here ?

ABNER. Madam, do I *look* like a married man ?

MOLLIE (*smiling*). Well, he heard that at any rate. (*Loud.*) Do you own this dwelling ?

ABNER (*smiling*). No, there's no telling, no telling how soon I may be ; but I'm not even engaged yet. (*Aside.*) That'll bring her round, I guess.

MOLLIE. "The combat deepens. On, ye Brave," etc. The prospect brightens. When Polly and I lost our heroes, imagining them drowned, we agreed never to marry ; but to go out West and spend our days farming and hunting.

ABNER (*aside*). That's interesting. Go on, Mollie ; I can't hear a word.

MOLLIE. But this alters the case quite materially. If he proposes, why, I accept. If he don't ; why, I'll — I'll keep on farming and hunting with Polly.

ABNER (*aside*).

"A lady farmer who never had beaux
Knew how to wield her ploughs and her hoes.
As men seemed to prefer others to her,
She swam with the tide, nor lowered her pride ;
But said, If not a man should propose,
I've still left my ploughs and my hoes."

MOLLIE. Yes ; at the very worst, it is still Polly and I. What a prize that Polly is, to be sure !

ABNER (*aside*). Yes ; that's Conrad's opinion to a T. (MOLLIE *rises ; aloud.*) Oh, please don't go away yet, for I have something in particular I wish to say to you.

MOLLIE (*seating herself*). The whole room is full of marriage proposals. He is about to propose. I see it. I know it. The very air whispers, pop goes the weasel — I mean, pop goes the question. I am strongly impressed with the idea that this apartment has recently been the scene of wooing and winning.

ABNER (*aside*). What a fortunate thing it is to be deaf — sometimes. (*Aloud.*) Please excuse me for detaining you ; but I can't help asking your advice ; for you so remind me of a Chicago gambler.

MOLLIE. I remind you of a gambler ?

ABNER. Yes ; you have such a winning way. But first of all, promise me that you will not betray my confidence.

MOLLIE. Certainly not ! for as the young lady replied when the youth who saw her home begged for secrecy upon the affair,

"Don't be alarmed; for I am ten times as much ashamed as you are."

ABNER. You are sharp. However, anything but a namby-pamby woman.

MOLLIE. That's his taste, is it? Then, I'll give him a few doses. (*Aloud.*) Your wished-for advice reminds me of the youth's mustache, which he requested the barber to color. The barber glanced at his young customer's upper lip and asked if he brought his mustache with him.

ABNER (*laughs*). Yes; like the Western territories, extensively laid out but thinly settled. But the advice I seek is peculiar, and I seem obliged to pursue the course of the tender-hearted Dutchman who cut off his dog's tail one inch at a time so that it wouldn't hurt him. The fact is I'm after a wife.

MOLLIE. Whose wife are you after?

ABNER. Well, you are sharp, any way. But to make a clean breast of it, I want a lady too good for me, of course; but I need just such a lady.

MOLLIE. Do you know such a lady?

ABNER. Know such a baby? Why, I don't wish to adopt a baby.

MOLLIE. Do you know such a lady?

ABNER (*laughing*). Know such a lady! Capital joke! Yes; I know just such a lady.

MOLLIE. Well, then, you are not ignorant of a lady's curiosity. Describe her. Does she reside near here?

ABNER. About ten miles distant. She is (*ABNER describes MOLLIE as she appears—dress, hair, eyes, etc., as comes most easy and natural for him.*) I should have sought her hand years ago, but I always imagined that she disliked, yes, hated me, and for that reason I followed in the wake of another.

MOLLIE. I'll not attempt to deny that I feel highly flattered and greatly honored. But you know the old saying, and it contains a world of truth:

"The happiest life that ever was led
Is always to court and never to wed."

Now, as your wife, I should be your slave. As your sweetheart you take me to all the entertainments, sleigh rides, etc.

ABNER. And as your husband what am I? After ten hours of hard labor I leave off work and go to chopping wood, drawing the water, and getting in coal, wood, and kindlings. I have a friend who is just such a husband. But one of the greatest of all his hardships is that his wife so often comes very near calling him horey.

MOLLIE. How near?

ABNER. She calls him Old Beeswax. Now, this, like cold pork and beans, may do for fifty or sixty meals, but not as a steady diet.

Oh, I tell you, there are two sides to all such questions. But come now, be my wife and share my lot as you ought years ago.

MOLLIE. Is there a good dwelling on your lot?

ABNER. No; but I'll build one. Say that you will be my wife next Sunday. True, we haven't courted any; but after our wedding we'll sit up every Sunday night till eleven, and we'll live as married people should with a couple of nice bears in the house.

MOLLIE. Two bears?

ABNER. Yes; bear and forbear. Come now, before some one enters and there is a great gulf between us. We can arrange the details after our bethrothal.

MOLLIE. Why this haste? You know there is far more music and melody in single-blessedness.

ABNER. Yes; but wedded bliss is the most melodious.

MOLLIE. Possibly; yet you know the remark of the fellow running from the jail—"Distance lends enchantment to the view." Again,

"As I walked by myself, I talked to myself,
And myself said unto me,
Beware of thyself, take care of thyself,
For nobody cares for thee."

ABNER. Come, Molly, let us throw aside these masks, for we knew each other from the first. I'm a very careful man, and I wish the care of you. My love for you is not merely silver washed.

MOLLIE. Then, it must be a gold-plated affection.

ABNER. O Mollie, you're too bad. Come now, have you anything to say why sentence of a wedding ring and an engagement kiss should not be pronounced upon you?

MOLLIE. Look here, Abner Mills, you are not half as hard of hearing as you were.

ABNER. No; my talk with you has helped my hearing wonderfully. Say that you'll marry me next Sunday, and the faintest whisper—*Yes!* will be plenty loud enough for me to understand the whole word. And that is the day on which your brother Conrad and Polly are to be tied up in a hard knot. Both are in this very house, and—Hello! Whoop! Fainted! Broke the news too suddenly. Forgot she thought her brother drowned.

(ABNER is about to take her in his arms to assist her to keep her sitting posture, when, hearing a noise, he turns to look, during which time LIONEL enters; MOLLIE sees him and rises to her feet and steps aside. LIONEL takes her place. ABNER puts his arms around him. Business as he discovers his mistake. LIONEL smiles, laughs, etc., as he may choose. ABNER leads MOLLIE out, saying,)

ABNER. You'll hear from me, young man, whoever you are. You'll hear from me.

LIONEL. All right! Thank you. Write or telephone, and let us know how you're getting along. *(To himself.)* Well, here I am

alone once more. When they bound me what a horrible face I put on as if they were nearly killing me! And how easily I cleared myself the moment they left. Well, what next? Heard Kitty was false. Disguised myself as a live Yankee, and was just in time to save her. Well, that was fortunate. Then played the dude and saved her the second time. Fortunate again. She's not after Abner Mills. But who is she in love with? Well, that's for me to find out. This time I'm neither Yankee nor dude, but I've lost all my memory by a terrible accident at the mines. I shall not even remember Kitty when we meet. And here she comes. I'm not an idiot, but a very simple-minded man.

(ENTER KITTY. *Business all through this interview.*)

KITTY. Why, Lionel, is this really you?

LIONEL. Yes; that's my name, I believe; but I met with a terrible accident at the — the — mines — yes, the mines. Do you know me? You are very pretty. What is your name?

KITTY. I'm Kitty Mason. Don't you remember me?

LIONEL. Kitty Mason, Kitty Mason? Let me see. No, I don't seem to know who you are. Do you live in this great, large house?

KITTY (*aside*). How sad this is! But he shall never leave me again. I'll marry him, and he shall have the best of care and the most skilful physicians, and I'll have him cured. Poor Lionel, I love him more than ever for his misfortune. (*Aloud.*) Take a chair. (LIONEL *seats himself*, and KITTY *draws a chair close to his*.) There, you look more comfortable. You say that your memory is all gone. Is your health good?

LIONEL. Oh, yes, my health is excellent; but my eyesight is poor. Now, I can see that man over there, but I can't see the man right side of him.

KITTY. Why, what do you mean? Which man can't you see?

LIONEL. That one with black hair and mustache. But I can see the next one plain as day. (*Of course, this description can be varied.*)

KITTY. Oh, this is terrible! But how can you describe the man when you can't even see him?

LIONEL. Well, that's what puzzles me. I spoke to a miner about it, and he told me to use glasses. I asked him how many, and he said, two, of course. Well, I went right across the street and called for two glasses, and I drank both three times full of lager beer; but it didn't do a bit of good. Why, do you know when I held my hand up, so, I saw two hands instead of one. Now, you wouldn't call that any improvement of the eyesight, would you?

KITTY. No; certainly not. I wouldn't drink any more such stuff if I were you.

LIONEL. Wouldn't you, though? Well, then, I won't either. And I saw a snake when I tried those glasses, only I didn't see any snake, you know.

KITTY. Saw a snake, and didn't see any; how was that?

LIONEL. I'll show you. (*Imitates drunken man.*) I was 'toxicated. Tried to put my hand'chief in my hat, and I put it on top—on the rim—just so; and the end hung down right 'fore my eyes, so—and when I grabbed at it—so—so—so—ye see I was 'cited—thought 'twas a snake going to bite me; and I grabbed 'bout foot ahead—so—so—so—till at last I caught it like this. Nothing but a hand'chief. Knew then I hadn't got the jim-jams. See?

KITTY. Yes; I see. And what did you do then?

LIONEL. I'll show you. (*Rises and places a chair so that he will run against the back. Imitates drunken man and staggers up to chair.*) Evening shades! See? So I thought 'twas a man when it was a post; and I said, "'Scuse me; I didn't know you were there." Then I stepped back, like this, and started again, like this, and went right into the post again, like this; and I said, "Please 'scuse me; I thought you had gone." Then I said, "Shake hands and call it square," etc. See?

KITTY. You'll never touch such vile stuff again, will you?

LIONEL. No; I never will. You are such a pretty girl that I'll sit right down beside you again. Seems to me you are the prettiest girl I ever saw. What'd you say your name was?

KITTY. Kitty Mason. I own this house. Wouldn't you like to reside here with me?

LIONEL. Now, you don't mean it, do you?

KITTY. Oh, yes, I do; for I—I—I—love you—and—

LIONEL. Now, I'm awful bashful, and I shall need a good deal of coaxing. Oh, I shouldn't dare to say I loved you, I'm so nervous. KITTY. Well, then I'll do the love-making.

LIONEL. What! are you going to court me?

KITTY. Yes; seeing that you have forgotten our engagement, I'll do the courting.

LIONEL. Pshaw now, you don't mean to, do you? Why, I feel just as skittish as a young colt. Hold on a minute till I take a long breath. There now, go ahead before I get fidgety again.

KITTY (*lays her hand on his shoulder*). I love you I—I—

LIONEL. Hold up till I take another long breath. I'm all of a fidget again. There, go ahead once more.

KITTY (*lays her hand on his shoulder again*). LIONEL (*looks at the hand*). Yes, I do love you so much, and I offer you my hand and my heart.

LIONEL. What! you want to marry me?

KITTY. Yes; I want to marry you. I want you to marry me, and never leave me.

LIONEL. Oh, you will have to ask my pa and ma.

KITTY. Why, but you haven't any parents.

LIONEL. No, I'm an—an— My memory is all gone. Suppose you ask my sister. That's just the thing. Don't you think so?

KITTY. Oh, but you haven't any sister either.

LIONEL. Well, then I must be an orphan. But if I had a sister you could ask her just as easy as nothing. I know what to do now. Let me see — yes; ask my sister's brother.

KITTY. Well, but your sister's brother would be you.

LIONEL. Would it though? Well, I don't know what you will do unless you ask me over again. Hold on then, till I take two or three long breaths. Oh, I'm awful skittish. But you are just the nicest, prettiest girl that I ever went anywhere a-fishing! And if I'm not too fidgety I will say yes.

(Puts his forefinger against her arm or side and laughs.)

KITTY. Now listen to me. Look right at me. Before that accident you and I were engaged to be married. We loved each other with all our hearts. It was my first love, and my last. I never so much as thought of any one but you. And understand that we are engaged now. I will not let you go. You must never, no, never leave me. Can't you see that you are the one to ask me? Come now, rouse yourself; ask me, and I'll marry you next Sunday.

LIONEL. What! you were never false for one moment?

KITTY *(rises to her feet, her whole manner changed as well as his)*. Lionel Forrest! have you dared to doubt me for so much as a single moment? And you have also dared; yes, dared, to test Catherine Mason through this silly masquerade! When I was twice told that you were false, there was no other feeling save emphatic indignation at the slander. Yet you, yes, you, Lionel Forrest, you! you —

(Enter arm in arm, or otherwise, ABNER and MOLLIE, CONRAD and POLLY, MINER and NANCY, and DAVID and NELLIE.)

LIONEL. Now, now, now! Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! —

KITTY. Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! Am I a kitten to come and go at your beck and call? Out of my sight! Away with you!

LIONEL. Now don't, don't, don't! please don't! Why, just look here a moment. I — I —

KITTY. That's just where I am looking. O Lionel, Lionel, that it should ever come to this!

LIONEL. Listen at least to my explanation. I entreat it only this once. Please listen.

KITTY. No! after such conduct I will not listen to you.

ABNER. Hold on then, and listen to me, To-morrow is Sunday; and there are three couples of us going to be married that afternoon. David Jones and his adopted daughter will stand up with us; and how can we leave you out? Why, it's utterly impossible. Of course you don't wish to get left. Again, we can't wind up this play unless you make up. I sincerely beg your pardon, Miss Mason; and I shall not believe, because I cannot believe, that you really and truly do forgive my serious offences unless you and Lionel join in the wedding bells.

KITTY. Yes, I do forgive you freely and fully, and especially seeing that you and Mollie have come to an understanding just as you should have done years ago. Allow me to compliment and congratulate you both.

MOLLIE. But I reject your compliments, and I will not recognize your congratulations except on condition that you forgive Lionel — forgive him with all your heart. Nay, you shall not be welcome at our wedding on Sunday unless you acknowledge your old lover as your betrothed husband. And last, but not least, I will not suffer Abner to accept your pardon unless you reinstate Lionel in your good graces.

KITTY. Why, Mollie, are you aware of the fact that you are addressing such language to one of your best friends?

MOLLIE. Most certainly I am. And, furthermore, you have no right to complain since you address worse language to the best of all *your* friends.

ABNER. I am anxious, yes, very anxious, for your forgiveness; but I believe that Mollie is right.

POLLY. Yes, just right, except that her words are not half forcible enough. Kitty Mason, if you refuse to make up with Lionel Forrest, Conrad and I will never darken your doors again, and we will not suffer you to enter our house. (*Raising her hatchet.*) Isn't that so, Conrad?

CONRAD. Of course, it is. Polly shall tomahawk you. And if you ever ask of us the slightest favor, we shall give you this evasive reply: See you hung first. And now a word of advice: to use an Oriental phrase, translated from the original Greek, The sooner you cave in the better.

KITTY. But I never will! Never! *never!*

CONRAD. Well, hardly ever. It comes hard for me to address such language to a lady, especially to one I have held in such high esteem from my boyhood; but, like the old priest's prayers for the sterile farm lands, our most earnest petitions are of no avail here. Nothing less than forty cords to the acre of heavy, plain words will produce a decent crop. Why, Miss Mason, should God mark one-thousandth part of our sins, who could stand? Yet you condemn your best friend for his first offence. An obstinate man is bad enough; but from a mulish woman Heaven defend and preserve us all.

POLLY. And so say we all of us. With the change of a word a certain passage of Scripture, just describes you: "And she spake unto her friends saying, saddle me a mule; and they saddled *her*." Oh, you'll find that we give no peace to the wicked. We shall torment you day and night so long as you bear the mark of beastly ingratitude in your conduct towards Lionel.

KITTY. Am I to be insulted in this manner in my own house? I tell you I don't like such language.

NANCY. Then lump it. Remember the words of the prophet Nicodemus: "Grin and bear it." Comfort yourself with these con-

soling words. Well, I did think you had just a little common sense. But I suppose you expect to be exceedingly joyous and happy in your present frame of mind. And you most surely will when you succeed in warming your hands and feet by the moon.

MINER. Yes, it's simply moonshine diluted with some very thin starlight. And your happiness, your great joy, will resemble Obadiah Oldbuck's big fortune — had ten thousand dollars' worth of old second-hand flour barrels without any heads. The happiness you are seeking for is like a stunted cabbage : never comes to a head. To make use of a familiar Latin quotation, "It's like a colored baby — great cry and little wool."

KITTY. What! both you and Nancy turn against me?

NANCY. Yes! you've turned the whole tide; for you seem determined to forfeit all claim to our friendship. Of what can you possibly be thinking? Reject Lionel for merely testing your sincerity! And does it so frighten you to have your love tested? Is your course in this respect wise?

MINER. No, its otherwise. She turns her back upon all that is wise and joins the otherwise people. Why, David Jones will tell you that much. Come, Jones, a little chin music from you. Advice is cheap. Plenty of it, you know. In the language of Washington when he crossed the Delaware, "Wade in!"

DAVID. I don't wonder that he surprised the Hessians by that remark. But I've no advice to throw away. To quote an old Roman maxim, "Against stupidity the gods themselves are powerless." But perhaps not against the goddesses. Nellie, if you choose to say a few words, I'm agreeable.

NELLIE. And I do choose to speak. Kitty Mason, if you know what's best for yourself, you will marry Lionel Forrest next Sunday. If you don't, we'll make up faces at you, and instead of Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! we shall say scat, scat, scat! just as we scare away any other old cat. You're no longer our Kitty! You're a cross old cat. I'd be ashamed of myself to act like you. I wouldn't show my face. I'd tie up my head in a meal bag; so there! After Lionel has disguised himself as Solomon Stokes and Orlando Augustus, and twice saved you, you haven't sufficient gratitude to forgive him. I'm so glad I've found a good old dad; and I'll not live with you another day. You're a cross, hateful old thing! and it is you who need forgiveness and not Lionel. He's too good for you.

KITTY. So you are, Lionel: you were always too good for me; and it is I who need to ask forgiveness.

LIONEL. No, no! Kitty, I protest against that; and I'll never doubt you again.

KITTY. But I knew not that you were twice my preserver.

LIONEL. Why, who else should it be?

KITTY. Yes, who else could it possibly be except you?

NELLIE. You ain't a cross old cat, are you? You're our good pet Kitty; and you're to be married next Sunday. And (to DAVID) we will stay with her another day, will we not?

DAVID. Yes ; she's a perfect jew's-harp.

CONRAD. And isn't it jolly though ?— Four weddings to-morrow ! And Miss Mason is going to have a lion and add an L to her house.

POLLY. A lion and an L ?

CONRAD. Yes ; Lion — L.

POLLY. Oh !

MINER. Oh, I tell you, it'll be just splendid ! She'll have any quantity of timber to sell — a whole forest all to herself.

NANCY. A forest ?

MINER. Yes ; Lionel Forrest. He'll get sold, of course.

MOLLY. And then it's nice to have money ! And Lionel must have plenty, for he has already engaged a mason to see to the house.

ABNER. A mason to see to the house ?

MOLLY. Yes ; Kitty Mason.

ABNER. Oh, get out with your conundrums ! Let's wind up this play. Now that all the bad are made good, and Lionel and Kitty have made up, and all the lost are found, and some of us have found each other and are going to be married next Sunday, we give you all a very cordial invitation to attend the quadruple wedding at the — Church, on — Street. The ceremony will be performed by the Rev. Mr. — Come, Lionel, a concluding word from you.

LIONEL. Ladies and gentlemen, I sincerely pity all those poor, benighted heathen who have been deprived of the privilege of witnessing this performance. But to accommodate it will be repeated on (*naming the evening, or "at some future evening"*). On that occasion the performance will be given free of charge ; but a small collection of (*naming price of admission*) cents will be taken at the door or by the ticket-seller.

Position of Characters at Close.

MINER and NANCY, DAVID and NELLIE, LIONEL and KITTY,
ABNER and MOLLIE, CONRAD and POLLY.

CURTAIN.

ANOTHER "COUNTRY SCHOOL."

THE OLD-FASHIONED HUSKING BEE.

AN OLD FOLKS ENTERTAINMENT IN ONE SCENE.

By **NETTIE H. PELHAM.**

For eleven male and five female characters, and as many more as desired. Scene, the interior of a barn, easily arranged; costumes, old fashioned. Plays forty minutes or more, according to number of songs and specialties introduced. Very easy to get up, and very funny. An excellent introduction for a dance, supper or sociable, where a mixed entertainment is desired.

Price, 15 Cents.

SYNOPSIS:

SCENE. — Uncle Nathan's barn. Bobby and Scipio. In black and white. A few conundrums. "Silence am gold." Gathering of the neighbors. Music and fun. Thomas Jefferson is heard from. "Von leedle song," by Solomon Levi. Betsy and Josiah. A leap-year courtship. Algernon Fitznoodle and Little Lord Fauntleroy. The dude and the darling. Fitznoodle takes a tumble. Patrick and Ah Sin. Race prejudices. Harmony out of discord. Music. Betsy and the swing. A little mistake. Betsy recites. THE HUMANIPHONE. Pat and Kitty. The red ear. "Hurrah for supper!"

A DOUBLE SHUFFLE.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By **HARRY O. HANLON.**

Three male and two female characters. Scenery and costumes very simple. An admirable little parlor piece, playing about thirty-five minutes. Fred Somers, a collegian, with a taste for practical joking, tries to play a little joke on his sister and his fiancée, but they succeed in turning the tables completely upon him and his two college chums. Very bright and amusing. A sure hit.

Price, 15 Cents.

A NEW PLAY FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS.

A Companion to "REBECCA'S TRIUMPH."

ANITA'S TRIAL; Or, Our Girls in Camp.

By ESTHER B. TIFFANY, author of "A Rice Pudding," "That Patrick,"
"Young Mr. Pritchard," etc.

Price, - - - - - 25 cents.

This is a bright and sparkling comedy in three acts, for eleven female characters. Its story is entertaining, and its dialogue distinguished by this author's delicate humorous touch. One scene only is necessary for the three acts — a camp in the woods, easily arranged. The dresses are simple and picturesque camping costumes. The enormous success of "Rebecca's Triumph" has created a demand for this sort of piece, to meet which we confidently present "ANITA'S TRIAL," in which is solved, with no less success than in its predecessor, the difficult problem of constructing a play of strong human interest without the assistance of male characters.

THE CHRONOTHANATOLETRON; OR, OLD TIMES MADE NEW.

An entertainment in one act for sixteen girls, written for the Class Day Exercises at Dana Hall School, Wellesley, Mass., by two members of the Class of '87 and first performed before members of the school and their friends, June 18, 1887, and later at Ellsworth, Maine, April 6, 1888.

Price, - - - - - 25 cents.

THE PEAK SISTERS.

A humorous entertainment for young ladies. Arranged by MARY B. HORNE. Any number of ladies may take part, but seven only are necessary. No scenery; costumes very simple. This laughable trifle meets with invariable success wherever performed.

Price, - - - - - 15 cents.

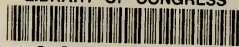
THE BOOK OF DRILLS.

PART I.

A group of entertainments for female characters for stage or floor performance, by MARY B. HORNE, the author of "The Peak Sisters," etc.

Price, - - - - - 30 cents.

WALTER H. BAKER & CO., Publishers, 23 Winter St., Boston.



AN ENTIRE NOVELTY.

THE GREAT MORAL DIME SHOW

AN ENTERTAINMENT IN ONE SCENE.

By MARY B. HORNE,

Author of "THE PEAK SISTERS," PROF. BAXTER'S GREAT INVENTION,"
"THE BOOK OF DRILLS," "THE CARNIVAL OF DAYS,"
"PLANTATION BITTERS," ETC.

Nine male, seven female characters. Costumes simple; scenery an ordinary interior, or may be dispensed with altogether. Plays from half an hour upward, according to the number and character of additional specialties introduced. Printed exactly as first performed by the Unity Club, Watertown, Mass., on Friday evening, February 5, 1892.

This most amusing entertainment is a burlesque of the ordinary "dime-museum," so-called, but is entirely devoid of the vulgarity of its original, and perfectly adapted to church or home performance. The characters are, save the lecturer and her assistant, a wonderful collection of "freaks" of nature (somewhat assisted by art) who sing, dance or recite, according to their special abilities, in illustration of the explanatory lecture. It is most elastic in its requirements, can be played on any stage or platform, with or without scenery, and with a greater or smaller number of characters, according to taste or necessity. It can be made uproariously funny, and is in character as well as fact

A SEQUEL TO THE PEAK SISTERS.

Price, - - - 15 Cents.

SYNOPSIS.

SCENE.—The exhibition hall of Sister Keziah's Show. Sister Keziah's introductory lecture. Johnathan, the bashful assistant. Introductory hymn. Introduction of the "freaks." DANIEL MCGINTY *redivivus*. Daniel's song LUCIA ZARATE, the celebrated Mexican dwarf. KIOTO, the shortest man alive, *not financially*. The wonderful MERMAID. The Mermaid's song. CASSIUS WHITE, the ossified boy. A "rocky" recitation. KALLULU, the only specimen of his kind in captivity; illustrated by cuts. SIGNOR GALASSI, the celebrated Glass Eater. Galassi sings. ALLEGRO PENSEROSO, the wonderful two-headed girl; not to be confounded with the more common two-faced girl. Two ways of eating a pickle. IDA and IONE, the Grecian maidens. RAPHAEL TINTORET, the blind painter, who paints blinds in full view of the audience. AH CHIN and WUN LUNG, the Chinese twins, extremely well connected from birth. "The Land of Tea." KA-FOOZLE-FUM, the Turkish vocalist. Grand finale and curtain.

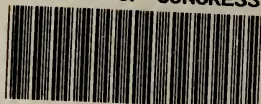


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